

Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

There is societal recognition that mental health and wellbeing should receive more attention and support. There are opportunities to learn from the pandemic experience and create enhanced workplace arrangements to support staff, including when there are challenging and abnormal pressures.

Mental health concerns include stress, depression, anxiety, bipolar and schizophrenia. While not a medical condition, problematic stress in this context is an adverse reaction to excessive pressure or other types of work-based demand and can lead to mental health problems. This is different from positive levels of stress which can help staff to perform their work well.

Mental health and wellbeing (jointly referred to as wellbeing within this policy).

Commitment

Lowestoft Town Council (LTC) is committed to the wellbeing of its staff. This commitment is based on its moral and legal duty of care to staff, and also recognises that factors such as retention, attendance, skills development and achievement levels are affected by wellbeing. Mental health problems are common and merit LTC taking a proactive and open approach to staff wellbeing.

LTC will ensure the provision of a safe, inclusive and supportive working culture and environment, with staff protected from discrimination. This includes the provision of suitable resources, facilities and training for the matters at 1 to 8 below.

LTC will maintain in this and any successor policies, its positive and proactive approach to wellbeing, with an appropriate resource allocation. It will also maintain equality and diversity and health and safety policies and will have appropriate staffing and recruitment procedures.

LTC will maintain a Personnel Committee, which will:

- Promote a culture which is positive about staff wellbeing
- Receive reports from the Clerk on staff wellbeing
- Review this policy and the related staff wellbeing delivery at least annually
- Encourage initiatives and events which promote staff wellbeing

The Clerk will ensure that the following matters, as relevant, are duly considered and incorporated in the context of mental wellbeing, including through day-to-day management, informal support/meetings, and formal appraisal and other review processes:

1. **Reasonable adjustments** i.e. the required reasonable adjustments for disabilities
2. **Individual adjustments** i.e. enhancements, where reasonable, to take account of individual staff characteristics to enable their positive and productive work
3. **Resilience and responsibility** i.e. individual responsibility for own health and wellbeing
4. **Demands** i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment
5. **Control** i.e. how much say the person has in the way they perform their work
6. **Support** i.e. the level of encouragement, resource, training and support provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues
7. **Relationships** i.e. promoting positive working, the avoidance of undue conflict, and addressing unacceptable behaviour
8. **Role** i.e. the understanding of their role and how this fits with the roles of colleagues

9. **Change** i.e. how organisational change is managed and communicated within the organisation
10. **Work environment** i.e. the workstation, sites and equipment for required work

The Clerk and any managers will receive suitable training to enable them to fulfil their functions and will continue to ensure that there is a trained staff Mental Health First Aider and Mental Health Champion. This will support the delivery of this Policy, the identification of early warning signs of poor mental health, the identification and amelioration of workplace triggers for poor mental health or stress, and the signposting to sources of support.

The Clerk will ensure that the Council is advised of any resources and support required for the fulfilment of this policy.